

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 AGRE-00 AF-10
COME-00 ACDA-12 DRC-01 /087 W
-----062693 030226Z /70/47

O R 011345Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5920
INFO USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 2694

(C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR MRN--OSLO 2694, VICE 2693)
SHAPE FOR POLAD
WHITE HOUSE FOR VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PINR, NATO, NO
SUBJECT: DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE CALLS NORDLI HOME

1. THE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WAGE NEGOTIATION PACKAGE, NOW
FACING THE TIME CONSTRAINT OF THE STATUTORY JUNE 9 (SECOND
FRIDAY IN JUNE) STARTING ADJOURNMENT DATE, CAUSED LABOR
PARTY LEADERS TO SEND AN URGENT PLEA TO NORDLI TO COME
HOME IN TIME TO PREVENT A LAST-MINUTE UNRAVELING OF THE
LABOR PARTY'S ENTIRE ECONOMIC PROGRAM.

2. THE PERCEPTION OF CRISIS IS, AMONG BOTH LABOR AND
OPPOSITION POLITICIANS, VERY REAL. A KEY ELEMENT, ALLOWING
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ALMOST NO TIME SLIPPAGE, IS THE SETTLEMENT WITH THE
AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. UNLESS A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED BY JUNE 1,
COMPULSORY ARBITRATION IS THE OPTION THAT, MOST PROBABLY, WOULD
HAVE TO BE ESTABLISHED. THAT PROCESS, INVOLVING A CABINET
MEETING, A KING IN COUNCIL SESSION, AND ACTION BY THE STARTING,
WOULD REQUIRE ALL OF THE TIME REMAINING BEFORE THE
STARTING'S JUNE 9 ADJOURNMENT. THUS THE LABOR PARTY

LEADERSHIP, RELIANT ON NORDLI'S STATURE AND CONCILIATORY POWERS, SAW NO OTHER COURSE BUT TO CALL THE PRIME MINISTER HOME FOR THE FINAL PUSH, AND LED ACTING PM INGER LOUISE VALLE TO CALL NORDLI WITH THIS REQUEST LATE MAY 30.

3. WHILE REGRETTING THE ABRUPTNESS OF NORDLI'S DEPARTURE AND THE EVIDENT ABSENCE OF SUFFICIENT NOTICE TO THE USG, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE MFA'S POLITICAL DEPARTMENT TOLD EMBOFF PRIVATELY THAT NORDLI HAD PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED CANCELLING HIS TRIP ENTIRELY IN ORDER TO ATTEND TO THESE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS. FORESEEING THAT THE VISITS TO KINGSTON, WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK MIGHT HAVE TO BE SUDDENLY CURTAILED, NORDLI AND FONMIN FRYDENLUND PRIORITIZED THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TRIP AS FOLLOWS TWO DAYS BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE: (1) NATO SUMMIT, (2) MONDALE DINNER, (3) JAMAICA AND (4) SSOD. BOTH NORDLI AND FRYDENLUND ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE WASHINGTON VISIT AND ONLY A POLITICAL CRISIS OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PRESENT ONE WOULD HAVE CAUSED HIM TO ABSENT HIMSELF.

4. NORDLI'S SUDDEN RETURN TO OSLO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NATO SUMMIT HAS BEEN GIVEN PROMINENT ATTENTION BY THE MEDIA. THEIR INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S MOVE RANGED FROM DEFENSIVE TO OPENLY CRITICAL DEPENDING ON THEIR POLITICAL PERSUASION. THE LABOR PRESS HAS STOUTLY DENIED THAT NORDLI'S RETURN HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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PASSED AT THE SUMMIT AND EMPHASIZED THAT HIS PRESENCE WAS NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH THE VERY REAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE WAGE NEGOTIATIONS. NORDLI WAS TAKEN TO TASK IN THE OPPOSITION PRESS FOR SEEMING TO SLAP THE SUMMIT AND NATO IN THE FACE AND HAVING HIS PRIORITIES SKEWED. ALTHOUGH THE AFRICAN ISSUE WAS MENTIONED IN ALL ARTICLES, NO ONE SEEMS TO SERIOUSLY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT NORDLI LEFT BECAUSE OF AGGRAVATION OVER AFRICA'S TREATMENT DURING THE FIRST DAY'S SESSION OR IN FACT, IN PROTEST OVER ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED AT THE SUMMIT. MOST PAPERS UNDERSCORE NORDLI'S LACK OF PREPARATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE AFRICAN DISCUSSION AND CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT FOR FAILING TO BRIEF THE PRIME MINISTER ADEQUATELY.

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EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 AGRE-00 AF-10
COME-00 ACDA-12 /086 W
-----062468 030220Z /70/43

O R 011345Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5921
INFO USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 2694

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 2694 VICE 2693)

SHAPE FOR POLAD

WHITE HOUSE FOR VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE

5. UNDER SECRETARY IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, ESKILD JENSEN, COLFIRMED TO US JUNE 1 THE ABOVE REASONS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S RETURN FROM THE UNITED STATES. JENSEN SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER RECOGNIZED THAT THREE OR FOUR VERY IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS WERE REACHING A QUOTE DELICATE STAGE UNQUOTE THIS WEEK IN THE STORTING AND THAT IT WAS WRONG OF HIM AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT TO BE ABSENT DURING SUCH AN IMPORTANT AND SENSITIVE MOMENT. JENSEN STATED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER ESPECIALLY REGRETTED MISSING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S DINNER WHICH HE HAD VERY MUCH LOOKED FORWARD TO.

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6. JENSEN STATED THAT NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR SOMMERFELT HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION TUESDAY NIGHT (MAY 30) AND SUBSEQUENTLY DISCUSSED THIS DECISION WITH MEMBERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF WHO, ACCORDING TO JENSEN, EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEED TO RETURN FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS. AS JENSEN PUT

IT QUOTE AMONG POLITICIANS FORCE MAJEUR IS SOMETHING WHICH IS
READILY UNDERSTOOD UNQUOTE.

7. JENSEN ALSO STATED THAT HE WAS VERY IRRITATED WITH
THE PRESS COVERAGE OF NORDLI'S DEPARTURE, ESPECIALLY THE
COVERAGE WHICH ATTEMPTED TO LINK HIS DEPARTURE TO DISPLEASURE
OVER THE DISCUSSION OF AFRICA AT THE NATO SUMMIT. ACCORDING
TO JENSEN, NORDLI IN HIS MEETING WITH THE NORWEGIAN PRESS
ON MAY 31, HAD CHARACTERIZED SUCH LINKAGE AS QUOTE RIDICULOUS
AND ENTIRELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. UNQUOTE

8. COMMENT: WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SOME PRESS SPECULATION
LINKING NORDLI'S PRECIPITATE DEPARTURE TO SUBSTANTIVE
ISSUES AT THE SUMMIT MEETING (I.E. AFRICAN ISSUES), NO
GON OFFICIALS HAVE GIVEN ANY CREDENCE TO SUCH REPORTS.
(MFA SOURCES, WHILE ADMITTING THAT THEY HAD NOT PREPARED
NORDLI WELL FOR DISCUSSION OF SUCH ISSUES, WERE VEHEMENT
IN DENYING ANY LINKAGE BETWEEN SUCH ISSUES AND THE PM'S
RETURN). POLITICIANS ON BOTH SIDES ATTRIBUTE NORDLI'S
RETURN TO THE CRITICAL POINT WHICH THE WAGE PACKAGE HAS
NOW REACHED. ALL HAVE POINTED OUT ANEW THE FACT THAT
LABOR IS STILL A MINORITY GOVERNMENT; THAT CONSENSUS
ON AN ISSUE OF THIS SENSITIVITY IS GOING TO REQUIRE
ALL THE SKILL THAT NORDLI CAN BRING TO THE TASK AND THAT
THE PM HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RETURN IN TIME TO AVOID AN
UNRAVELING OF THE PROGRAM THAT COULD, IN TURN, BRING
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DOWN THE LABOR GOVERNMENT.
LERNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, ECONOMIC PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978OSLO02694
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780232-0373
Format: TEL
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197806107/aaaadodj.tel
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2161015
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE CALLS NORDLI HOME
TAGS: PDIP, PINR, NO, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/12d2417d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014